

Briana Pistone Testimony Senate Bill 602 - Final.

Uploaded by: Briana Pistone

Position: FAV

Briana Pistone Testimony Senate Bill 602

My name is Briana Pistone; I am a Work First Foundation Fellow closely with America Works of Maryland, Inc. (AWMD). I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today in support of the Bail Diversion Program and the resources provided to support the success and rehabilitation of the clients sent to us. In June 2017 AWMD collaborated with the WFF and Baltimore City District Court Judge Pastore to launch the bail diversion initiative. The goal is to provide stable and gainful employment as an alternative to incarceration, giving deserving defendants a second chance. When AWMD receives a referral for services, we assess an individual's immediate needs, such as stable housing, childcare, transportation, and professional clothing. After this assessment, they are immediately enrolled in job training services and meet with an AWMD Sales Representative to find an employment position that fits their skills and qualifications. As of January 2022, we are proud to share that we have placed 140 participants into full-time employment; 87% have been retained for 30 days, 80% for 90 days, and 67% for 180 days. Due to our long-standing relationship in the Baltimore Metro area, we have partnerships with employers willing to hire defendants despite having open charges. They, as well as AWMD, believe in stable employment as the means for a second chance to reintegrate into society.

In addition, we offer a wide variety of trainings to prepare our participants for the roles needed to reenter the workforce. Our trainings ranges from basic skills, including resume writing, interview preparation, conflict resolution, how to turn on the computer, to more advanced computer skills and essential professional skills. Furthermore, the Training and Sales Team offer more customized services when meeting with participants to discuss potential employment opportunities largely based upon their interests and background. We also hold a

myriad of events, including a quarterly job fair where we expose participants to employers from many different industries and allow them to showcase their developing skills. Each week, we send information about new open positions, market changes, and independent job fairs hosted by partnered employers as well.

Additional resources we provide come from our local partnerships and outreach to other reputable organizations that can assist clients with wraparound services such mental health treatment for themselves and their families. We partnered with larger organizations like the Kidney Foundation and the American Heart Association speak with our clients biannually to discuss ways to improve wellness in everyday life. Our goal is to meet clients where they are in their job search and assist them in all aspects of their lives to ensure long-term employment retention and overall prosperity. Voting in favor of this bill will ensure America Works of Maryland can continue to devote our best efforts to empower individuals and guide them toward a path to stable employment. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony for SB 602.pdf

Uploaded by: Cory McCray

Position: FAV

CORY V. McCRAY
Legislative District 45
Baltimore City

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Vice Chair, Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety, Transportation,
and Environment



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 221
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3165 · 301-858-3165
800-492-7122 Ext. 3165
Cory.Mccray@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 602

District Court - Jobs Court Pilot Program

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 602. This bill passed the Senate with a 45-0 vote in 2020 but did not receive a hearing in the House due to the truncated session.

Judge Nicole Pastore started the District Court Re-Entry Project in 2016 to address the most pervasive obstacle facing individuals with criminal records: the ability to obtain meaningful employment.

Finding long-term employment with a regular income allows these individuals to become stable and productive members of our communities and, not surprisingly, they become much less likely to reoffend.

Participants in the program are offered educational opportunities, job training, and job placement. They can train in a variety of skills from catering to construction. Participants can learn to operate a mix of machinery from computers to forklifts, to drones. They can find careers in auto repair, and the sustainable energy, maritime and culinary industries.

In the first 6 months of the program, over 50 individuals enrolled. As of 2020, over 364 individuals have been enrolled. Individuals come to the program through a variety of court referrals, dismissed cases and even civil proceedings. Some as an alternative to incarceration, a condition of probation, or pursuant to pre-trial supervision.

I am enthusiastic about the future of this important program, and the possibility of duplicating it throughout the state. The purpose of Senate Bill 602 is to do just that.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 602.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cory V. McCray'.

Cory V. McCray
State Senator

Jane Miller Testimony - SB 602.pdf

Uploaded by: Jane Miller

Position: FAV

Testimony of Jane Miller

SB 602

22 February, 2022

I would like to thank Senator McCray, The Chair of Judicial Proceedings, and members of this committee for taking the time to hear my colleagues and my testimonials today. My name is Jane Miller and I am a Fellow through the Work First Foundation working with America Works of Maryland, Inc. focusing on the Bail Diversion program. Through the Work First Foundation, we combine macroscopic research with the aim of assisting traditionally marginalized communities and reducing poverty with on-the-ground work assisting participants in obtaining gainful employment. At America Works of Maryland, we focus on assisting formerly incarcerated individuals, those receiving benefits through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), individuals receiving SSI and SSDI payments, and other hard to serve groups by connecting them with employment opportunities and providing workforce development training. The services we offer to clients through the more recently piloted Bail Diversion program remain consistent with these goals and aforementioned services, and in the five years since the program began under the District Court Reentry Project (DCREP) in March of 2017, we have worked with over 400 individuals in job training and eventual employment placement.

There has long been a need for bail reform in the city of Baltimore. Historically, the practice of cash bail has disproportionately harmed low-income individuals and communities of color. A 2015 study conducted by the Vera Institute of Justice found that 60 percent of people in jail were not convicted, but merely could not afford to pay the required monetary amount for their bail. Further, academic literature has found that, “In large urban areas, Black felony

defendants are over 25% more likely than white defendants to be held pretrial.” For these reasons and countless others, Baltimore implemented new reforms to pretrial detainment in the winter of 2017. These new practices have significantly reduced the percentages of those held for cash bail, with numbers dropping from an initial 35 percent to 14 percent by the end of 2018.

Unfortunately, in this same time frame, there has been a jump in those held without the option of bail in any form. As opposed to keeping anyone in pretrial detainment, we need more resources for initiatives like the Bail Diversion program, which offer an alternative to incarceration before trial and ultimately the opportunity for stability through employment.

The Bail Diversion program and similar programs in other cities are not only more cost efficient than incarceration, but produce better outcomes for individuals who often should never have been incarcerated in the first place. Of clients who have come through the Bail Diversion program at America Works of Maryland, less than 15 percent were ultimately found guilty of the crimes for which they were initially charged. While awaiting trials dates pushed back significantly during the last two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, individuals participating in our Bail Diversion program have had the opportunity to undergo virtual and in-person job and technical skills trainings, work one-on-one with account executives to discuss job opportunities, create their own resumes, and practice job interviewing skills. Individuals in the program have also found employment at The Home Depot, Second Ave Thrift Stores, UPS, Down to the Dust Cleaning Services LLC, Amazon, Green Bay Packaging, and more. The Bail Diversion program at America Works of Maryland provides a way for individuals to gain meaningful life skills and find employment at a lower cost than incarceration, but we need strong support and resources to continue serving Baltimore residents in the best manner possible.

I am asking the committee for its support of Senate Bill 602 so that we may continue to offer our Bail Diversion program as an alternative to incarceration and work with a diverse set of energized individuals hoping to improve their skill set and find employment. I have personally witnessed this program give a second chance to countless citizens on top of keeping them from facing unnecessary incarceration. Thank you for your time today.

Sincerely,

Jane Miller

SB0602-JPR-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Natasha Mehu

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB 602

February 22, 2022

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director, Office of Government Relations
RE: Senate Bill 602 - Baltimore City - District Court - Jobs Court Pilot Program
POSITION: Support

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 602.

SB 602 creates a five-year Jobs Court Pilot Program within the Baltimore City District Court. This program is administered and monitored jointly by the court and the Baltimore Workforce Development Board. This bill mandates the governor appropriate \$500,000 to the board annually to entities that participate in the pilot program.

The Jobs Court Pilot program envisioned in this bill would provide economic opportunity to individuals that are vulnerable to recidivism by providing full-time job training and placements as an alternative to incarceration. If successful, it could also serve as a model for establishing similar programs across the state.

The BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 602.

Byron Jones Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Obie Chinemere

Position: FAV

Byron Jones Testimony

Thank you committee for hearing my testimony today. My name is Byron Jones. I'm 31 years old and I have lived in Baltimore my whole life. After dealing with what can feel like an unfair court system, I know that there's hope for guys like myself thanks to the bail diversion program.

Being placed in America Works presented me with tremendous opportunities to better spend my time and find employment. We began training quicker than I ever would have expected. The staff was helpful and understanding of my situation. They managed my expectations and gave me really important information on how to proceed with my job search process. After looking over my resume and making sure I was mentally prepped, we discussed job opportunities. I wanted to get something quickly to start putting money in my pocket. They knew the exact place for me.

After interviewing with Holly Poultry I was hired within a week. I have been working there ever since and have been very successful. I am a forklift operator who takes pride in his work. I'm excited about the future and feel confident that I am on the right track.

I am certain that this program and ones like it are exactly what the city of Baltimore needs to better assist the community and give others hope. This experience changed my outlook on life when I was feeling like I was at the end of my rope. Young people like myself need employment opportunities and sometimes it can be difficult when you are connected in some way to the justice system. We all have times when we struggle and need assistance. America Works has been that for me. I hope they get the chance to be that for others.

Javon Thomas Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Obie Chinemere

Position: FAV

Javon Thomas Letter of Support

My name is Javon Thomas; I appreciate the opportunity to share the positive influence my time in the America Works of Maryland, Inc. program has had on the trajectory of my life. I have been working with America Works for only a couple of months and my situation has already drastically changed. The America Works program has been great for me. They helped me get back to work provide for myself and my family. I was previously a stay-at-home dad until I got into some trouble that led to my incarceration. The judge recommended America Works to me to help me find a job and stay out of jail. The mistake I made could have meant that I would sit in jail, with no jobs or ability to work on myself to give my family and I a better future, but instead, it led me to America Works of Maryland, Inc. My trial date has now been postponed many times without a definitive date, and all this time I could have been in jail but instead in only a short amount of time I have been able to completely change my path.

The most important aspect of the America Works program for me has been the communication. I am constantly speaking with them about ways to move forward, and they are always listening to what I want in a position. I got a tremendous amount of help creating a resume in order to apply for the right types of positions and I have been connecting with the whole team to learn about new opportunities. The staff has great resources and try to do whatever they can to help everyone they work with, treating them as they would family. After a difficult time, the encouragement and guidance of the team made me feel less alone while looking for work. I feel very hopeful for the future for me and my family, knowing that I have assistance getting back on my feet to be able to provide for them. I can honestly say America Works has helped me to better myself and I highly recommend them to anyone who needs a job that was in a situation like me.

Yours Truly,

Javon Thomas

Baltimore City, MD

SB 602 America Works Testimony - Employer Testimon

Uploaded by: Obie Chinemere

Position: FAV



February 9, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Sunil Kumar, I am writing to support House Bill 785 and SB 602. We are committed to helping service organizations which provide employment, housing, supportive, wrap around and or other services and resources to the economically challenged.

We have supported and will continue to support organizations such as America Works and the Bail Diversion Program as their service delivery goals are in alignment with our program goals when it comes to serving residents in the area. We have seen firsthand how our partnership creates and delivers an effective service delivery system while also addressing the complex employment challenges facing the low-income populations.

In conclusion, let it be known that our agency and staff fully support the efforts of the Work First Foundation through its partnership with America Works to help individuals achieve long-term employment. We applaud their efforts to build a program that helps individuals obtain the resources needed towards short- and long-term goals for themselves and their families.

Please contact me at 410-646-1700 with any concerns or questions regarding this testimony.

Sincerely,

Sunil Kumar

General Manager

SB602 - Holly Poultry Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Obie Chinemere

Position: FAV



February 11th, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is José A. Vázquez. As HR Administrator at Holly Poultry LLC, our company has recently partnered with America Works to recruit employees. Specifically, the Baltimore Bail Diversion Program of America Works has been beneficial to our company.

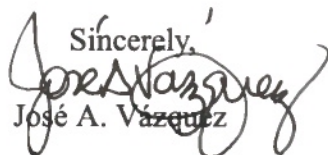
Our partnership with the Baltimore Bail Diversion Program has allowed us to hire valuable workers for our company. In total, the number of applicants we have hired is nine employees. This includes two recent new hires who are set to begin work next week.

Each employee has become a hardworking team member of our production department. In particular, one employee has become a lead member in their own department. Overall, each employee has proven to be a responsible and reliable worker. Thus far, the employees who have been working for us have been thriving in our company.

Additionally, this past November I was fortunate enough to attend the graduation ceremony of our employees as well as others from various organizations. It was rewarding to see our workers being honored for their contributing hard work and success.

Without no doubt, the partnership between Holly Poultry LLC and the Baltimore Bail Diversion Program has produced successful workers and it is my hope that it will continue to do so.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 410-727-6768, Ext 134 or Cell: 443-827-1725. Thank you.

Sincerely,

José A. Vázquez

Support for SB 602.pdf

Uploaded by: Sherry Nickerson

Position: FAV



February 21, 2022

The Honorable WILLIAM C. (WILL) SMITH, JR., Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB 602: Baltimore City – District Court – Jobs Court Pilot Program

Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstriecker and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Lisa Rusyniak, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake. Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake is a strong supporter of Senate Bill 602.

SB 602 establishes the Jobs Court Pilot Program in the Baltimore City District Court. The purpose of the pilot program is to reduce recidivism by offering defendants an opportunity to participate in full-time job training and job placement programs as a condition of probation, an alternative to incarceration, or a condition of pretrial release.

As an organization that provides workforce development training and employs returning citizens, Goodwill knows first-hand how important job training, case management, employment and retention services are in the efforts to reduce recidivism. Stable employment greatly improves the lives of returning citizens, their families, and the communities in which they live.

Goodwill's SEETTS program (Supporting Ex-Offenders in Employment, Training and Transitional Services) has been in operation for 20 years and has had success both within Maryland correctional facilities and upon release. SEETTS, a Maryland state funded program, provides in-reach vocational evaluation and job readiness training services to inmates, those recently released and to anyone with a criminal record. A graduate of our SEETTS Program is employed as a District Manager within our Retail Division, serving as a source of leadership and direction to many employees throughout our organization. This is one of many examples within Goodwill that demonstrates the opportunities available to returning citizens when offered employment resources and support.

SB 602 would allow for programs to provide an alternative to incarceration and provide employment stability to individuals at risk of entering the prison system. We urge a favorable report on SB 602.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Rusyniak".

Lisa Rusyniak
President and CEO

V.Bido Fellow Testimonial - SB 602.pdf

Uploaded by: Veronica Bido

Position: FAV

Testimony of Veronica Bido

SB 602

Judicial Proceedings Committee

22 February 2022

I would like to thank Senator McCray, the Chairman, and members of this committee for taking the time to hear my testimonial today. My name is Veronica Bido and I am a Fellow through the Work First Foundation working with America Works of Maryland, Inc. I assist in managing and supporting the Bail Diversion program put forth by the Work First Foundation and its partnership with the Baltimore City District Court Project (DCREP). Our Bail Diversion program is the only program under the DCREP programs that address alternatives to incarceration. At the core of our work at America Works is assisting marginalized communities and connecting hard to serve groups with employment opportunities and workforce development training. Our Bail diversion program is no exception, and everyone who participates has access to our support and resources. I hope to illustrate the positive impact of this program and the benefits to ensure the continuation as well as the expansion of the program.

Throughout the country, there has been a call to action for bail reform. The state of Maryland followed this call to action in February of 2017 with the aim to reduce unreasonable high cash bail amounts and promote the release of defendants on their own recognizance as much as possible. The high cost of bail can create a high burden that many individuals cannot endure. It puts individuals in an unstable situation where employment, family, and stability are at risk. The enactment of bail reform has prevented people from being detained for not being able to afford bail.

Our Bail Diversion program plays a critical part in helping the participants on a path to stability by providing resources and support. It is important to understand that our program does not absolve accountability. The program is unique, as it is one of the few in the entire country that actually utilizes employment and economic empowerment as an alternative to bail. Our program is more than keeping people out of detention. We are partners alongside the participants in helping them to realize their own potential and apply themselves to find purposeful employment. It is that partnership with the participants that have led to the success we have observed.

Through this program we are able to provide support and work first development training ranging from 2 weeks to a year, putting participants in the best position possible to obtain employment. Since the beginning of this program, we have had over 400 participants. The percentage of participants who utilize our training is approximately 89%. The majority of participants have a positive outcome at their trials; with no incarceration or probation. The Judges that are involved in our program have had a first-hand view of the success of the participants and given them another opportunity.

Most importantly, if there is nothing else you take from my testimonial; is that when we work with one participant we are not just helping them, but their families. I urge the committee today to support the SB 602 Bill. The Work First Foundation's Bail Diversion program and partnership with the District Court Re-Entry Project has proven to be successful and impactful. Our program has the potential to transform the bail and pretrial across Maryland, but the country. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Veronica Bido

SB0602 - 2.12.22 -- Baltimore City - District Cour

Uploaded by: Donald Fry

Position: FWA



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 602 – BALTIMORE CITY – DISTRICT COURT – JOBS COURT PILOT PROGRAM

Sponsor – Senator McCray

February 22, 2022

DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support with Amendments

Senate Bill 602 would establish the Jobs Court Pilot Program in the District Court of Baltimore City. The purpose of the program is to reduce recidivism by offering defendants an opportunity to participate in full time job training and job placement programs as a condition of probation, an alternative to incarceration, or a condition of pretrial release. The Administrative Office of the Courts is required to develop a plan to implement and monitor the program.

According to the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the U.S. Department of Justice, Maryland's recidivism rate is 40 percent. The GBC contends that this number is unacceptably high and significant policy changes must be made to reduce it. Investment in job training is a proven, data supported method. Increased access to job training and job placement programs is a needed investment in the effort to reduce recidivism. This is especially true in our most at-risk communities.

While the GBC supports increased investment, requiring the Administrative Office of the Courts to develop and monitor a completely new program is not the most efficient use of limited resources. Baltimore has a substantial existing network of advocacy organizations and nonprofits dedicated to reducing recidivism and helping formerly incarcerated individuals obtain employment, as well as numerous existing training programs. A partnership between the District Court and these existing organizations would eliminate duplication of efforts and allow each party to focus on its core mission. The GBC would propose an amendment to Senate Bill 602 to facilitate a partnership between the Administrative Office of Courts and existing organizations providing job training and assistance for justice-involved citizens, rather than requiring the Administrative Office of the Courts to create a brand new program.

This bill is consistent with one of the key tenets in *Gaining a Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth:

Government leadership that unites with business as a partner. Maryland leaders must set a welcoming tone that communicates positive support for business, respect for the private sector as a partner, not an adversary, and reflects a strategic plan for business growth and job creation.

The GBC respectfully requests that the Judicial Proceedings Committee report Senate Bill 602 favorably with the proposed amendment.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org

SB 602 Balto City Jobs Court Pilot (McCray) JPR_B&

Uploaded by: Barbara Wilkins

Position: INFO



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

LARRY HOGAN
Governor

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lieutenant Governor

DAVID R. BRINKLEY
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

SENATE BILL 602 Baltimore City - District Court - Jobs Court Pilot Program (McCray)

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: February 22, 2022

COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings and Senate Budget & Taxation

SUMMARY OF BILL: SB 602 creates a Jobs Court Pilot Program in the Baltimore City district court, the purpose of which is to reduce recidivism by offering defendants an opportunity to participate in full time job training and job placement programs as a condition of probation, alternative to incarceration, or a condition of pretrial release; and mandates an appropriation in the amount of \$500,000 in FY 2024 to the Baltimore Workforce Development Board for distribution to local workforce investment boards or other nonprofit entities that participate in the pilot program by identifying employers and training programs. The program sunsets in June 30, 2027.

EXPLANATION: The Department of Budget and Management's focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the \$500,000 mandated appropriation provision that impacts the FY 2024 budget.

DBM has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which will require spending allocations for FY 2024 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2022. Despite a provision in the bill, appropriations cannot be mandated in FY 2023.

Changes to the Maryland Constitution in 2020 provide the General Assembly with additional budgetary authority, beginning in the 2023 Session, to realign total spending by increasing and adding items to appropriations in the budget submitted by the Governor. The legislature's new budgetary power diminishes, if not negates, the need for mandated appropriation bills.

Fully funding the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Kirwan) will require fiscal discipline in the years ahead, if the State is to maintain the current projected structural budget surpluses. Mandated spending increases need to be reevaluated within the context of this education funding priority and the Governor's tax relief proposals.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19. High rates of inflation and workforce shortages may be short lived or persist, thereby impacting the Maryland economy. While current budget forecasts project structural surpluses, the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant budgetary vulnerability. The Department continues to urge the General Assembly to focus on maintaining the structural budget surplus.

45 Calvert Street · Annapolis, MD 21401-1907

Tel: 410-260-7041 · Fax: 410-974-2585 · Toll Free: 1-800-705-3493 · TTY Users: Call via Maryland Relay

<http://dbm.maryland.gov>

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at (410) 260-6371
or barbara.wilkins1@maryland.gov**